

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5818

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PASS TREASURY FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRILL

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN OECD
SUBJECT: INTERFUTURES STEERING COMMITTEE

REF: FUT(77)1

1. SUMMARY: THIRD MEETING OF INTERFUTURES STEERING COMMITTEE, HELD JUNE 21-22 UNDER DIRECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN ISAMU MIYAZAKI (JAPAN), GAVE GENERAL ENDORSEMENT TO WORK PLAN CONTAINED IN REF DOC. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH SOME DELEGATIONS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER CONTINUED WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS WHICH INTERFUTURES DIRECTOR LESOURNE PLANS TO COVER, STEERING COMMITTEE FAILED TO PROVIDE COHERENT GUIDANCE ON THE SUBJECT AREAS ON WHICH THE PROJECT TEAM SHOULD FOCUS ITS MAJOR EFFORT IN THE FINAL STAGES. STEERING COMMITTEE DECIDED TO AWAIT NEXT MEETING -- SET FOR OCT 20-21 -- BEFORE DECIDING ON FORMAT AND MODALITIES FOR MEETINGS OF SENIOR POLICY OFFICIALS IN 1978. CONSENSUS WAS, HOWEVER, THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE HELD AT MIN-
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ISTERIAL LEVEL BUT, RATHER, AT HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL BELOW THAT. FOLLOWING SUGGESTION BY US REP (ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRILL OF TREASURY), LESOURNE AND HIS DEPUTIES PLAN TO VISIT WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATIONS OCT 10-11. MESSAGE CONVEYED DURING THIS VISIT WILL BE A KEY DETERMINANT OF MANNER IN WHICH INTERFUTURES DEVELOPS IN ITS FINAL STAGES. END SUMMARY.

2. WORK PROGRESS. INTERFUTURES TEAM INDICATED THAT PHASES A (CONSTRUCTION OF A GENERAL FRAMEWORK) AND B (CONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC TOPICS) HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIAL-
LY COMPLETED. RESULTS OF THESE PHASES WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF TWENTY-ONE PAPERS, FIVE OF WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISTRIBUTED AND REMAINDER OF WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN HANDS OF GOVERNMENTS BY THE END OF SEPTEMBER. THEY WILL BE REVISED ON THE BASIS OF COMMENTS BY GOVERNMENTS, WHICH SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY THE END OF THE YEAR. LESOURNE INDICATED THAT THESE PAPERS SHOULD BE VIEWED AS AN ESSEN-
TIAL BACKGROUND SURVEY TO PREPARE FOR THE MORE FOCUSED, POLICY-ORIENTED EFFORT TO BE UNDERTAKEN UNDER PHASE C (ELABORATION OF SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE: ANALYSIS OF POLICY IMPLICATIONS). HE POINTED, HOWEVER, TO PAPER NO. 21 "ISSUES FOR THE ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES," WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF AUGUST, AS A KEY DOCUMENT IN WHICH HE WOULD SET FORTH THE MAJOR POLICY ISSUES ON WHICH THE TEAM PROPOSES TO FOCUS IN THE PROJECT'S FINAL STAGES.

3. LESOURNE INDICATED THAT INITIAL WORK UNDER PHASE C WAS WELL UNDERWAY. PROJECT TEAM HAD BEEN DIVIDED INTO THREE TASK FORCES, ONE DEVELOPING MACRO-ECONOMIC PROJEC-
TIONS AND LOOKING AT TRADE AND MONETARY QUESTIONS, AN- OTHER TAKING A SECTORAL APPROACH AIMED AT IDENTIFYING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRUCTURAL CHANGE, AND A THIRD TEAM HEADED BY LESOURNE HIMSELF WHICH WILL SEEK TO INTEGRATE THE WORK OF THE OTHER TWO TASK FORCES, DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS FOR

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATE THE WORK TO POLICY CHOICES FACED BY GOVERNMENTS.

4. COMMENTS BY DELEGATIONS REVEALED SOME CONCERN THAT PROJECT'S SCOPE HAD NOT YET BEEN NARROWED DOWN TO A FEW KEY POLICY ISSUES ON WHICH IT COULD EXPECT TO COME UP WITH SIGNIFICANT NEW INSIGHTS BY THE END OF 1978, WHEN INTERFUTURES IS DUE TO CONCLUDE. NEVERTHELESS, STEERING COMMITTEE AGAIN FAILED TO PROVIDE COHERENT GUIDANCE AS TO WHAT THOSE KEY POLICY ISSUES ARE. FOR EVERY SUGGESTED DELETION FROM THE PROJECT'S COVERAGE IN THE FINAL STAGES (E.G., ENERGY AND POPULATION, WHICH ARE WELL COVERED ELSEWHERE) SOMEONE PROPOSED THAT A NEW TOPIC BE ADDED (E.G., BELGIAN SUGGESTION THAT INTERFUTURES SHOULD TAKE UP HEALTH QUESTIONS AS A MAJOR DETERMINANT OF LDC DEVELOPMENT). THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE AGREEMENT, BOTH FROM PROJECT TEAM AND OTHER DELEGATIONS WITH US DEL'S STATEMENT THAT ONE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION INTERFUTURES COULD MAKE WOULD BE TO PROVIDE A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COSTS OF PURSUING ALTERNATIVE POLICIES AND THAT THIS "THERE AIN'T NO FREE LUNCH" LINE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXAMINATION MIGHT BE DEVELOPED INTO THE PROJECT'S MAJOR THEME.

5. PHASE D - ESTABLISHMENT OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERNMENTS. THERE WAS NO DISSENT FROM PROPOSAL, CONTAINED IN REF DOC, THAT TWO MEETINGS OF SENIOR POLICY OFFICIALS SHOULD BE HELD IN 1978, THE FIRST, IN MAY OR JUNE, FOCUSSED ON A FEW KEY POLICY ISSUES OF CONCERN PRINCIPALLY TO THE OECD COUNTRIES AND THE SECOND, TO BE HELD AROUND OCTOBER, FOCUSSED ON BROADER ISSUES AFFECTING BOTH RELATIONS AMONG OECD COUNTRIES AND WITH THE LDCS. THERE WAS CONSENSUS THAT THESE MEETINGS SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL BUT THAT PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE AT HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL BELOW THAT. OBJECTIVE WOULD BE INFORMAL GATHERINGS OUTSIDE OECD PREMISES IN WHICH SENIOR OFFICIALS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY EX-

PRESS GOVERNMENT POSITIONS BUT, RATHER, SEEK TOGETHER TO DRAW POLICY CONCLUSIONS FROM FUTURE SCENARIOS SET FORTH BY INTERFUTURES WORK. IT WAS AGREED THAT NO DECISIONS WOULD BE TAKEN REGARDING FORMAT AND MODALITIES OF THESE MEETINGS UNTIL NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING.

6. SUGGESTION THAT INTERFUTURES HOLD SERIES OF EXPERT MEETINGS ON SELECTED TOPICS UNDER CONSIDERATION WAS OPPOSED BY A NUMBER OF DELS, WHO FELT THAT PROJECT'S PERSONNEL AND OTHER RESOURCES COULD BE BETTER USED IN PURSUING INDEPENDENT WORK. DUE TO INTEREST OF A NUMBER OF DELS, HOWEVER, ONE SUCH MEETING WILL PROBABLY BE HELD LATER THIS YEAR CENTERING ON A COMPARISON OF WORLD MODELS. PROJECT TEAM, AND MOST DELEGATIONS, ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO VISITS TO CAPITALS BY LESOURNE AND HIS DEPUTIES AS A MEANS OF INSURING THAT NATIONAL CONCERNS ARE REFLECTED IN INTERFUTURES WORK AND THAT RELIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EVANT NATIONAL OFFICIALS ARE PLUGGED INTO THE PROJECT. IN THE FIRST SUCH VISIT, LESOURNE AND HIS DEPUTIES WILL GO TO JAPAN IN AUGUST. RESPONDING TO SUGGESTION BY US REP THAT SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE USEFUL PRIOR TO FINAL SELECTION OF TOPICS ON WHICH INTERFUTURES WILL FOCUS, LESOURNE PLANS A SIMILAR VISIT TO WASHINGTON OCT 10-11. PURPOSES WILL BE TO PRESENT IN DETAIL WORK COMPLETED BY THAT TIME AND TO SOLICIT GUIDANCE ON COURSE PROJECT SHOULD FOLLOW IN ITS FINAL STAGES.

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7. NEXT MEETING. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WAS SET FOR OCT 20-21. OBJECTIVES WILL BE TO A) AGREE ON A NARROWED LIST OF TOPICS FOR EXAMINATION IN FINAL STAGE OF PROJECT AND B) DECIDE ON NATURE AND MODALITIES FOR HIGH OFFICIALS' MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN 1978.

8. MISSION COMMENT: STEERING COMMITTEE AGAIN PROVED TO BE A LESS THAN FULLY EFFECTIVE FORUM FOR SHAPING AND DIRECTING THE WORK OF THE INTERFUTURES TEAM. MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE IS TOO HETEROGENEOUS AND NATIONAL VIEWS OF WHAT THE PROJECT SHOULD ACCOMPLISH ARE TOO DIVERSE FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE TO GIVE CLEAR AND COHERENT DIRECTION TO LESOURNE AND HIS TEAM. A MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE MEANS OF GETTING US VIEWS ACROSS WAS THE SERIES OF PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WHICH US DEL HAD WITH LESOURNE AND KEY TEAM MEMBERS. FROM THESE AND OTHER CONTACTS MISSION HAS HAD WITH INTERFUTURES TEAM WE HAVE GAINED THE IMPRESSION, WHICH WAS NOT ALTOGETHER APPARENT IN THE STEERING COMMITTEE ITSELF, THAT THE PROJECT IS MOVING TOWARD THE RIGHT TRACK. HOWEVER, IT IS APPARENT

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THAT LESOURNE IS HANDICAPPED BY AN ABSENCE OF CLEAR DIRECTION FROM GOVERNMENTS.

9. THE PROJECTED TEAM VISIT TO THE US WILL OCCUR AT A KEY POINT, JUST BEFORE THE NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING AND WHEN THE TEAM WILL HAVE TO BEGIN NARROWING ITS COVERAGE OF TOPICS. THIS VISIT WILL BE A MAJOR DETERMINANT OF THE COURSE THE PROJECT WILL TAKE IN ITS FINAL YEAR OF ACTIVITY. WE, THEREFORE, RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON PREPARE CAREFULLY FOR THIS VISIT, ENSURING THAT WE CONVEY A CLEAR VIEW OF WHAT WE WISH TO SEE EXAMINED CLOSELY AND WHAT WE WISH TO SEE EMERGE FROM INTERFUTURES' THREE YEARS OF WORK.

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